

et INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION



OUTRAGEOUS 1950s EC COMICS!



INCREDIBLE



5.10

FEB

2.00

27

CANADA

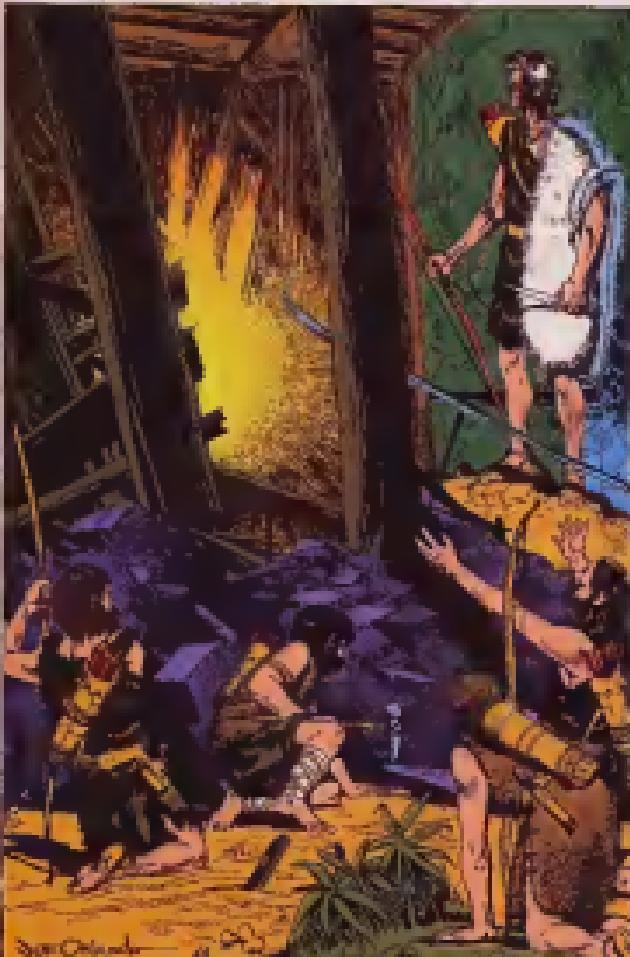
SCIENCE FICTION



FALLEN-IDOL

WE PLUNGE THE GOD ON THE THIRD EYE. WHO DRAZED THE MIGHTY RIVER TO THE SEAD PLACE, AND THIS TIME, THE GREAT MANY-LEGGED BEASTS HAD NOT TAKEN THEIR TOLL OF US. WHO BROUGHT THE MAGIC OF THE OLD ONE? AND OH! THE THIRD DAY, IN A HOLLOW MADE BY FALLEN BRAMPS OF METAL, WE FOUND THE GOD, AND THE OTHERS FELL UPON THEIR FACES AND WORSHIPED.

THE OTHERS SCRATCHED IN THE DUST BEFORE THE GOD, BUT I DID NOT. THE GOD STOOD WITH HIS MIGHTY ARMS SPREAD, AND ON HIS BREAST WAS THE SYMBOL OF THE LIGHTNING. YET EVEN SO, I DID NOT KNEEL. I RAN!



I KNOW THAT TWO GODS WHO NOT A KNOB, BUT RAZI WANT THE OLD GODS HAS CALLED ALREADY. I REMEMBERED THE TALES OF HORROR... ASIA ONCE...

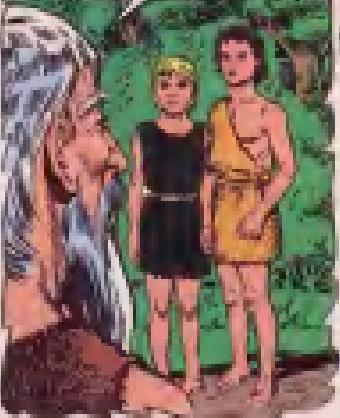
...SO I DONT WERE NOT AS WE...
THE OLD ONES? THEY LIVED IN THE
SEAD PLACE, ACROSS THE MIGHTY
RIVER, AND THEY DID NOT PLANT.
THEIR WORLD DID NOT PLANT
IN SEAD...



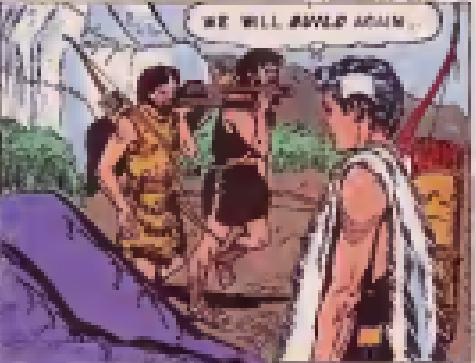
THE OLD ONES HAD GREAT STARS
IN THOSE DAYS. THEY HAD
MACHINES, CALLED ROBOTS - AND
THE ROBOTS BUILT ANOTHER ROBOTS.
AND ONLY THE ROBOTS TALKED...

I REMEMBERED THE TALES. BUT I
DID NOT SPEAK, FOR I WAS HAID,
THE SHRIEK, AND THE SON OF A
CROWN. AND WHILE I DID NOT SPEAK,
FOR I KNEW THAT THE OTHERS
WERE REMEMBRING THE GREAT TALES...

ALL THIS I KNOW, YET I SPOKE NOT,
FOR THE OTHERS WERE NOT HERE, AS
IT WAS HERE, THEY DID NOT KNOW
THAT WE HAD FOUND SOMETHING
STRANGER THAN MAGIC...



WE STARTED BACK, AND I DREAMED. I SWAM
ONCE AGAIN SWIMMING ACROSS THE GARTH LIKE
GIANTS - INSIDE, AND IT WAS ALL SO SIMPLE.



THERE'S BEEN NO MAGIC! WHO FOUND A MAGIC? WE HAD
ONLY TO MASTER ITS SECRETS. I SWAM TO THEM - RECOM-
BEFORE WHAT THE PRIEST HAD TOLD ME SO LONG AGO...

THE DEAD PLACE! THE DEAD PLACE IS FORGOTTEN! THE
HOLD ONES RESTORED IT WITH THE MAGIC! BEWARE,
KILL THEM. MAKE DEADLY TOO AS WELL!



NO... THERE'S BEEN NO MAGIC. BUT I HAD NOT KNOWN
THAT THERE I HAD NOT SEEN THE SCORCHED BURNING THEM
EVER SINCE I HAD FOUND OTHERS LIKE MYSELF... YOUNG
AND BOLD - I HAD BEEN AFRAID...

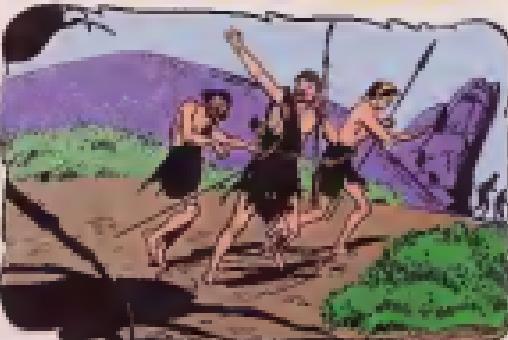
WE'D FOLED OUR RAFT ACROSS THE NIGHTY RIVER TO
THE DEAD PLACE AND WE'D GONE ASHORE, SHAKING IN
OUR FEAR...



AND THEN, THE MONSTERS HAD ATTACKED... THE GIANT, MANTICORES, DRAGONS...



THE LORENS HAS TOLD OF MONSTERS SUCH AS THOSE MONSTERS FOUND ONLY IN THE DEAD PLACE. THEY'VE BEEN CAPTURED SOMEHOW BY THE VOLT KIDS THAT HAS MADE THE DEAD PLACE DEAD. THE VERY SPIRITS OF THE OLD THEMSELVES TRY TO FUSE WITH THE OTHERS, THEIR FEAR, AND SOME OF IT HAS BEEN...



AND WHEN I'D RETURNED ACROSS THE MIGHTY RIVER, ONLY MYSELF'S BLOOD SAVED ME FROM THE WIND OF THE PRIEST, AND OF MY FATHER...

FOOL! NO MAN ENTERS THE DEAD PLACE AND LIVES! THE OLD ONES MADE IT SO! THEY MADE FORTRESS WITH THEIR MAGIC, AND THE FIRES GUARDED THE INSIDE TO GROW...

FORGIVE ME FORGETTING, BUT THIS I PROMISE! SO LONG AS I AM CHIEF, NO MAN ON OUR MARCHES WILL DIE BECAUSE OF HIS MADNESS!



I'D WATCHED, AND I'D LEARNED, AND I'D HUNGERED FOR THE TIME WHEN I COULD LEAD MY PEOPLE TO A BETTER LIFE, TO SEEM THEM HUMBLE... FREE...

BUT MY DREAM HAD BEEN A SPURIOUS DREAM. I HAD NOT FORGOTTEN MY DREAM. THE DEAD PLACE WAS FORBIDDEN TO ME, BUT I DREAMED OF GOING BACK, SOME DAY, AND FORGET THE OLD ONE'S MAGIC.



...AND I'D WAITED, DREAMING OF A GLORIOUS NEW BEGINNING FOR THEM. AND THERE ONE DAY, MY WAITING WAS OVER...

THE CHIEF... IS DEAD!



ED WAITES, AND ONE DAY IN PARADISE
WAS NO MORE AND I WAS CHEF. IT
MADE A FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR
HIM, AND THEN IT'S BORNED.

SOP, I AM SURE
TOMORROW WE CROSS
THE RIVER TO THE
DEAD PLACE.

SO IF WE WILL
NOT FOLLOW
A CHEF WHO
IS DEAD?

IF THERE IS
MUSIC IN THE
DEAD PLACE,
IT IS JAVA.
MAYBE WE
SHOOT YOUR
FISHING DREAM
BUT WE WILL NOT
SAY FOR IT!

YOU WILL CROSS
THE RIVER WITH
ME TOMORROW
ON THE SHIP THE
CHANCE OF
TODAY!

ONE MAN MADE HOLD BY THE FROG
HAD SPURGED AGAINST ME. THERE'D
BEEN NO OTHER WAY.

FOLLOW ME TO THE
DEAD PLACE OR
ONE "BROTHER" SPURGE
SHALL IT BE?

I WILL FOLLOW!



IT WAS FOR THEM THAT ED DREAMED, TO MAKE THEM
DIE MORE GREAT. AND YET, IT HAD BEEN ONLY THEIR
FEAR OF ME THAT HAD MADE THEM OBEDIENT. THE NEXT DAY...

LEARN THE LOVE OF GODS OF THE
COUNTRY AS I TEACH IT.



THO' I MURMURED AND MENTIONED, BUT THAT DAY ED
CROSSED THE MIGHTY MURKUS ONCE AGAIN, AND IT
LEAPED MUCH. THIS TIME, ED CHOSEN A PLAT PLACE
TO LAND EVER FROM THE MIGHTY PLURUS.

FOOT NO BEFORE US WATCH
TILL THE DARK, BIGGER
PLURUS FOR IT IS PROVED
THAT THE MARY-LIZARD
MONSTERS HAVE THEIR DEN!



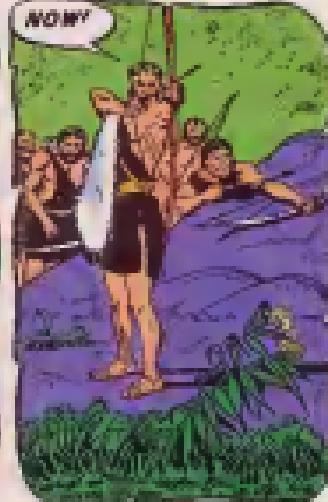
THIS TIME, ED SENT A MAN AHEAD AND THE REST OF US
HAD FOLLOWED, AND BY WISDOM HAD MADE THE WAY
EASY...



FIRST LOOKS IF THE
MARY-LIZARD MONSTERS
ARE THERE?

THEN WE SHALL GO
AROUND THE HUCKLE



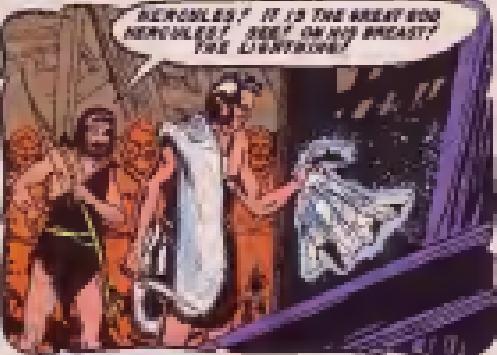


WE'D GONE ON... AND THERE'D BEEN NOTHING...



IT HAD BEEN SOMETHING WEAPONS IN A PLUNGED, PROTECTIVE JACKET... A GEM OF METAL, CLOTHESLESS, SIGHTED ON THE OUTSIDE AND PLACE WITHIN. IT'S DRAWN MY STONE KNIFE AND RIPPED IT AWAY...

"HERCULES! IT IS THE GREAT GOD HERCULES! SEE? IN MY BREAST, THE LIGHTNING!"



...BUT I'D KNOWN WHAT WE'D FOUND... AND SO I MADE THEM PEE AND BUILT A LITTLE SHED UPON WHAT WE'D FOUND AND CARRY IT OUT... BACK DOWN TO THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER... TO THE RAFT...

THE OTHERS HAD FALLEN UPON THEIR FACES AND WEERED...

"HERCULES' PRAYER TO HERCULES!"

"OH, GREAT GOD HERCULES!"



WE RETURNED TO THE RAFT, AND I TOLD THEM THAT DAY THE OLD WAYS WOULD RETURN. I TOLD ONLY THE OTHERS THAT WHAT WE'D FOUND DID MY THINKING.

ON DAY, WE WOULD BUILD AGAIN, A HOUSE THAT COULD DAY THE OLD WAYS. THOSE, HOW COULD A TROLL WAYS WOULD RETURN. I TOLD ONLY THE OTHERS THAT WHAT WE'D FOUND WAS ABOUT A GOOD



HOW I COULD NOT LET THEM THINK WHAT THEY WOULD IF THEY HAD NOT MY WISDOM? THERE WOULD BE TIME ENOUGH LATER TO SPEAK THE TRUTH, WHEN I LEARNED TO MASTER THE MACHINE.



THAT ENOUGH, LATER... AFTER I'D FOUND THE WAITING GOD UNLOCKED THE SECRET OF THE MACHINE, AND A NEW AND GLORIOUS DAY HAD CARRIED FOR THE RACE OF MEN



THE END

FAILURE

The ship hung a thousand miles above Earth, like a black forecast of doom. But the aliens were in no hurry. First, there was the usual council of war. After all, a space ship, even a giant intergalactic cruiser, could carry only so much fuel, only so much destructive force. It would not do to dissipate either needlessly. Yet, by the same token, the ship's mission was to seek out and destroy any life, on any planet, which might one day challenge the domination of the aliens' home world.

Quietly, leisurely, the war council decided. The planet below showed definite signs of intelligent life. Therefore, it must be destroyed. Ind, the ship's commander, gave the order: "Battle procedure, all beams and destructive devices, full power."

The alien ship dropped. Not swiftly. There was ample time. And from his control screen Ind watched the bluish ball below grow larger, larger . . .

"Full halt! Hover!" The order popped from his lips suddenly.

Carefully, Ind studied the foreign object on his screen. It had shot up from the blue ball, trailing fire. Small, sleek, glistening.

"A rocket! Salvage crew will bring it aboard."

It took only moments. The magnetic grapplers drew the rocket close, through an open lock. There was no resistance. Soon, the gleaming needle was before Ind.

"Life energy within, sir." That was one of the techs.

A power torch cut through the rocket's metal—and then it happened.

Pandemonium. The earth creatures leaped through the opening. For a split second they stood, staring at their captors. By comparison with the aliens they were tiny—and in their eyes was none of the cold, inhuman intelligence which marked the aliens. In their eyes was idiocy, nothingness. In their eyes was terror, no more. A terror which made them leap from where they stood, to beat against the alien ship's walls, to slam against crewmen, screaming and chattering, unreconciling.

"Cut them down." Ind had seen enough. These were not creatures to fear. These earth creatures were not reasoning beings, despite their rocket, despite their technology.

A beam lanced out, charred the earth creatures into nothingness.

Ind turned to his second in command. "Battle orders rescinded. We have nothing to do here. We go on."

The alien ship moved, gathered speed—and vanished. So swiftly that in seconds it was light years distant. It would never return . . .

— — —
Doctor Steven Crane, deep within the bowels of his concrete bunker at White Sands took his eyes from the instruments before him and turned to his assistant: "No signal, Andy. Nothing. The rocket must have disintegrated in space. I guess—we've failed."

Experimental Rocket C8—failure. That was how the record would note it. A pity. Crane had had high hopes. Yet he could still think of the rocket's passengers. "Too bad," he sighed. "Poor little monkeys. It seems a shame that they had to die—for nothing."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Uffington

THE ZEP CAME OFF OF THE BLACK SWIFT
SPITTING FIRE... AND DROVE HIS HELICOPTER
ACROSS ALIANTIS UNCOMFORTABLY IN ITS INTENSITY. IT WAS
THE PLANET'S LAST HOPE AND HABITAT. IT HAD
WAITED SO LONG, BUT NOW IT WAITED NO MORE.
DARL FARRY WOULD RETURN. THAT ROSE
WITHIN THE ALIOT SENSES OF THE ZEPPOET.
THEY WERE COMING BACK AT LAST! MEH!

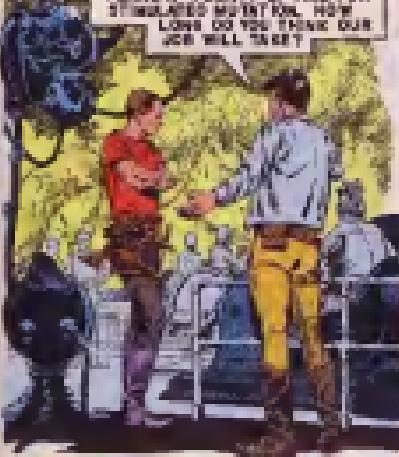
THE POCKET SPACER PLANE SETTLED, IN
ITS EASIERNESS. GROC BENT HIS MIND OUT
THROUGH ITS METAL TEST. THE MEN
WERE HOME.

"WHERE IT'S BEEN ALL
THIS TIME, CAPTAIN? NOT
OLD MOTHER NATURE,
REALLY OUTSIDE HER
SELF HERE?"

"STRANGE PLANTS
ARE HERE AND FLOWERS
YOU'RE A MUSOKEE,
MANOH! YOU KNOW
THAT?"



IT'S BEEN FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS SINCE
EARTH'S ECOLOGICAL TEAM RECORDED THIS
PLANET. PLENTY OF TIME FOR
STIMULATED MUTATION FOR HOW
LONG DO YOU THINK OUR
JOB WILL TAKE?

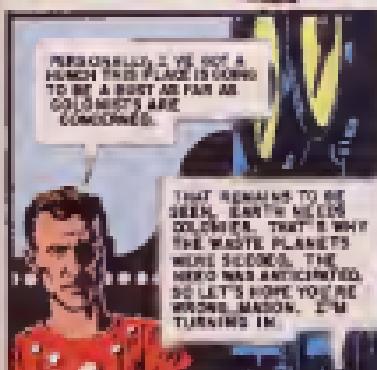


A FEW DAYS. I DON'T THINK IT
WILL TAKE LONGER THAN THAT TO
DETERMINE IF THE PLANET IS
SUITABLE FOR COLONIZATION. BUT
FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, I HAVE
MY DOUBTS.



PURCHASED A T-301, NOT A
MUNCH. THE PLACE IS GOING
TO BE A BUST AS FAR AS
GOLDMINES ARE.
CONSIDERATE.

THAT REMAINS TO BE
SOLVED. EARTH NEEDS
COLONIZERS. THAT IS WHY
THE WASTE PLANETS
WERE REBORN. THE
HERO HAS ANTICIPATED
SO LET'S HOME TO THE
WORLD AGAIN. I'M
TURNING IN.



CLOUD PRECIPITATED, AND THEM
WAS YOUR MOTHER. THE NEW
SLEEPS, BUT ERICK HAD HEARD
CONSIDERATE. THE THOUGHT
WAS SO STRONG. MEN
MUST COUNT! THAT
WAS IT ALL THROUGH
THE NIGHT, HE
RECORDED THE
DATA.



IT HAS BEEN SO LONG SINCE
ONE OF US LEFT. THE RACIAL
MEMORIES LINGERED. ONLY HE
COULD RECALL THE LEGEND WHICH
SAID HOW ONCE THIS PLANET WAS
BEAUTIFUL...



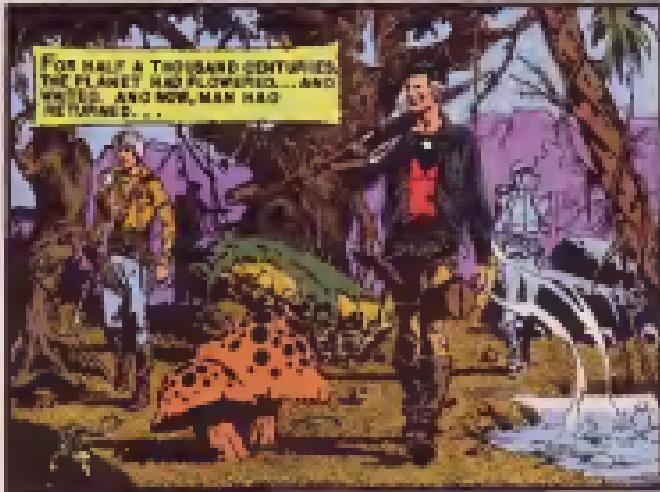
THEN THE SHIP HAD COME. THE OTHER SHIP, LONG
AGO. IT HAD LEFT BEHIND A GIFT OF SPICES AND HERBS
AND CHEMICALS. THE SHIP HAD LEFT BEHIND THE SEED
OF LIFE...



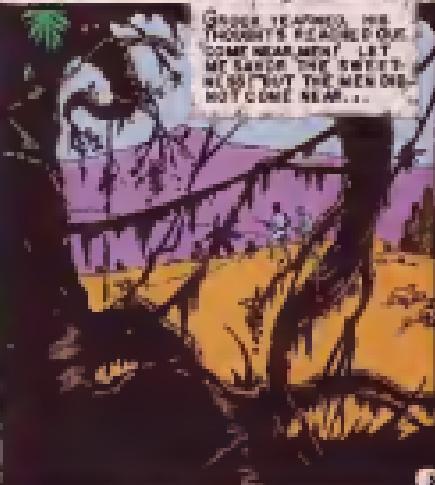
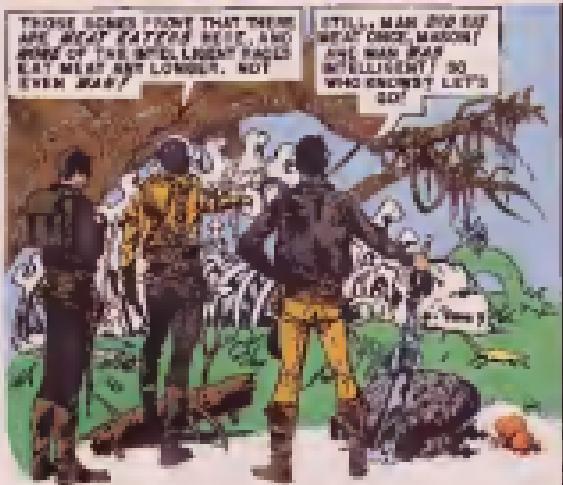
THE SHIP HAD COME AND GONE, AND
LIFE HAD TAKEN HOLD... ON THIS
DEAD, STERILE PLANET...

SLOWLY AT FIRST, A TINY SPOROCYST.
A MICROSCOPIC ANIMAL. THEN, AS
TIME CRESTED IT...

YESTERDAY HAD BROUGHT LIFE, AND
MAN'S INNOCENCE HAD IMPERCEPTIBLY
CHANGED SO THAT IT CHAMBERED,
EVOLVED... SWIFTLY.

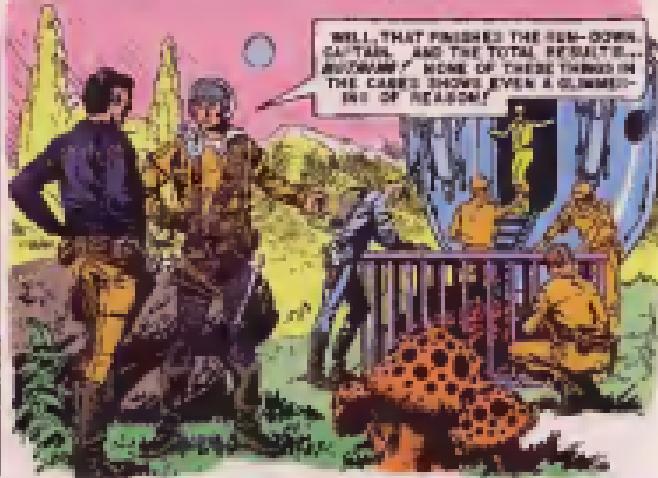


WE'LL SPLIT INTO TWO PARTIES, AS
USUAL. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT WE
WANT: SAMPLES OF VARIOUS LIFE
FORMS, PARTICULARLY INTELLIGENT
ANIMAL LIFE.



THE MAN DID NOT SONG HEAR AND SOON TRAVELED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. ALL HIS THOUGHTS WERE OF THEM IN THE LONG DAYS AFTER...

IT WAS EASY TO HIDE THEMSELF AGAIN AT LAST. ON THE THIRD DAY, THEY RETURNED. BUT BACK TWO NOT UNDERSTAND...



AND FROM OUR SURVEY, WE KNOW THAT CIVILIZATIONS ARE EXACTLY SIMILAR ALL OVER THIS PLANET. I WAS RIGHT: HUMANS COULD NEVER THRIVE HERE!

NO! PURPOSE NOT UNKNOWN STIMULATED IMITATION. THERE ARE ANIMALS THAT HAVE GOVEDILLE MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION IN FIFTY THOUSAND. AND THAT'S...
SUFFICIENT...

EXACTLY! NO WHERE ALONG THE LINE, THEIR EVOLUTION TOSSED SOME THINGS. YOU SEE, THE HORSES, NO FEET, OR NUTS! EVEN THE ANIMALS HAD BEEN TO AVOID IT!

I NOTICED THAT THIS IS ONLY ONE OF THE ANIMALS, BUT THE JUNGLE PROVES THAT THEY ENTERED THE FOREST



THAT MIGHT BE A SIGHT, AND UNQUOTE. RABBINS: THIS IS IN YOUR LIFE, WITH WHICH IS ANIMALS, I DECIDE TO APPROACH THE FOREST, AND REMOVE BUILT HABITATIONS?

SOURCE CAPTAIN, THE SOIL IS DRY AND THERE IS NO RAINFALL AT ALL. I CAN SAY IS THAT IF ANIMALS CAN EVOLVE INTO THINGS LIKE THESE HERE... THE SAME THING COULD HAPPEN TO US!

IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE STUCKED?

STUCKED? IT WOULD BE STUPID TO SPEND COLONIZATION MONEY LOOKING AT THE PLACE THE ONLY WAY IT WILL EVER BE. FOR THE COLONIZATION IS IT'S OWNED CLEAR, AND WE START ALL OVER AGAIN!

I'M AFRAID THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'LL HAVE TO DO. SINCE FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS... BANGED! THAT'S A FIFTH!



No! Shock almost smothered the words, but the men would not have heard, even if he had. Their minds were... different...

Still, there seems to me something Earth needs more than her secret population. Well, use this spot as a base of operations...



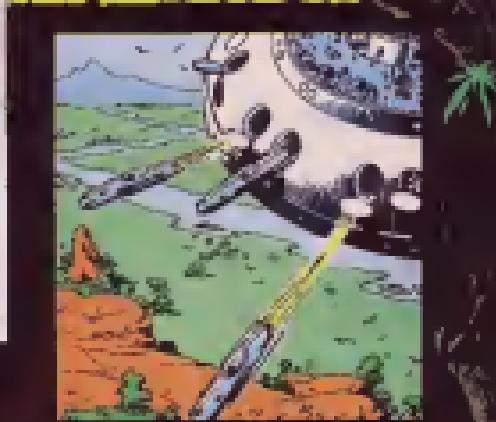
Man has come... and now we wait. Some to destroy, but the men were friendly. There was intelligent life here. There could only be one. How could shock make the men understand?



How could shock tell them, even if there were a means of communicating with them, without destroying himself?



There was no way... and so shock knew that next morning...



GRASS AND THE LANCES OF FLAME, THE
FLYING FLAMMERS AND LEAPED AND DIED, AND
BURNED, THE FIRES LEFT HATE FOOL, BURNED
DEAD...

A DAY BY DAY WHILE BY WINE,
THE PLANE TOOK, AND SOON
CLOUDS ONLY WATCH, SINCE
CLOUDS ONLY WAIT ARE HOPE...



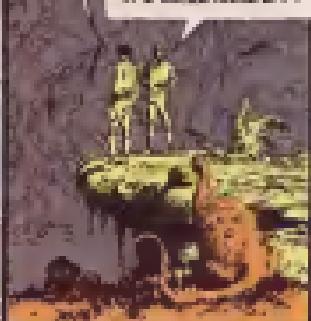
WORLD WAITED... AND
TEARRED, AND THE
FLAMING DEATH ROVED
CLOSER, BUT IN THE END,
THE WAITERS WERE NOT IN
VAIN...

WELL, SURELY WE'RE
ABOUT FORTY-EIGHT
W.L. DAY?

JUST ABOUT! WELL
BLUSH OUT THIS LAST
FATHER TOMORROW, THEM
WILL RE-BE-GO, AND I
CAN'T SAY I'M HOPPY!

WORLD, DON'T
TRY...

WORLD... AND DAY-
DREAM, DREAM...
ALMOST FEEL AS
IF THE PLANET ABOVE
IT'S BECOME KILLED...



EVERY DAY AND NIGHT I TALK TO HELL
CALL IT AN INSOMNIA, OR AS IF
SOMETHING... SOMEONE... WERE
REACHING INTO MY MIND...

ON THIS PLANET,
MANSON?

IF YOU'RE REACHING THIS TIME
IN INSOMNIA, HERE WHICH WE ARE
CONFIRMED, JUST THAT A MOVE
AROUND YOU SHOT PLANT
A FEW SPOTS DOWN, THAT
ALL THIS PLACE HAS MANSON
TO PROTECT?



YOU NEED A GUARDIAN, MANSON, WE
DO SO, BUT DON'T WE SLEEP DAY
IN THE DARK TONIGHT? SINCE
THE WORLD AND WELL, SINCE THE
SCOUTS OUT OF OUR WINGS,



GRASS SPREADER. IT WAS TOO
BRAVE TO BE ON TOP. BROCK HAD
WISHED SO HARD... FOR SO LONG.
AFTERWARD, HIS WISH CAME TRUE...

BLAZED DUST, USELESS
PLANET, NIGHTS ME THE
CREEPS!



AFTERWARD, BROCK COULD HEAR THE WIND BLOW AND NOT
CARE. HE COULD FORGET THE PLACES AND THE TURNED
EYES WHICH THE CAPTAIN FINALLY MENTIONED IN HIS
SLEEP...

...NO... INTELLIGENT LIFE.
NOTHING THAT... THINKS... BURN
IT... BURN IT ALL... START OVER...



LATER, BROCK WOULD
SAY... BECAUSE THOSE
WOULD BE MISTAKE NOW.
AFTER TONIGHT, NOTFOR
A LONG, LONG TIME.
BUT THAT DID NOT MAT-
TER NOW.



FOR NOW, BROCK LET HIS CREEPERS DOWN... GENTLY...



MAN HAS RETURNED AT LAST. AND BROCK WAS OVER-
HEATED. IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE ANY ANIMAL TWO
WVENTURED NEAR HIM...



THE HIGH STRUMMER... JALLES OUT FROM THE SHIP A SLIGHT VOICE ANSWERS. A FLAME APPEARED IN HIS FORT MOUTH IN NAME.

"WHAT'S GOIN ON OUT HERE? I GOT A GUN
GET SOME BODY TO
SHOOT! SHOOT!"



GROOK'S DAY DAWN. HIS VINES DROPPED, STRAND-LIKE, HIS LEAVES CURLED. AND DARKNESS BEGAN TO HUMMING PURSUPTIVE SENSES. VAGUELY, HE COULD HEAR THE MEN, SENSE THEIR VOICES, FADING...

THERE WAS YOUR
INTELLIGENT LIFE,
CAPTAIN THAT TREE!

INTELLIGENT? HOW CAN
YOU SAY THAT, GROOK? IS A
"THREE FEET-TALL" INTELLI-
GENT? CAN IT FLY? CAN IT
FEEL? CAN IT REASON?



GROOK SHED. HIS LEAVES DROPPED LIKE PAPER BITS TORN BY CHILDREN, AND THROWN TO THE WIND. CHILDREN WHO COULD NOT UNDERSTAND, PLEASED IT WAS BREAKING THEIR LIMITED IMAGINATIONS.

"ALL RIGHT LET'S GET DOWN. IT'S ALMOST DAWN.
ANYWAY, EVEN DADDY HAD LAST NIGHT INCLUDED
MASCOT'S INTELLIGENT TREE! WE'VE GOT TO BELIEVE
OUR DAD!"



GROOK, SHRIEKING, DROPPING THE WID, AS THE STREAM OF CONDUCTIVE ENERGY FROM ROAD'S WEAPON DISAPPEARRED IN THICKNESS OF FOG...



GROOK RECOVERED. HIS LEAVES REPLIED. THEIR VOICES
WERE ONLY WHISPERS NOW...

"CAN YOU SEE A "THREE FEET-TALL"
CAPTAIN? CAN YOU FEEL...
CAN REASON, CAPTAIN?"

"INTELLIGENT?
WHO EVER HEARD
OF A THREE-FEET-TALL
REASON?"



LATER, THE SHIP ROSE INTO THE GLOWING LIGHT.
PERHAPS THE PLANET LAY BLACK AND SOOTHELESS AND
STERILE. THE CAPTAIN TURNED TO MASCOT...

"IF THAT TREE WAS SO INTELLIGENT
MASCOT, WHY COULDN'T IT COMBINE
DATA WITH USE?"

"PERHAPS IT
ISN'T CAPTAIN?
PERHAPS WE
DON'T UNDER-
STAND IT INTELLI-
GENT ENOUGH TO
NEAR US!"



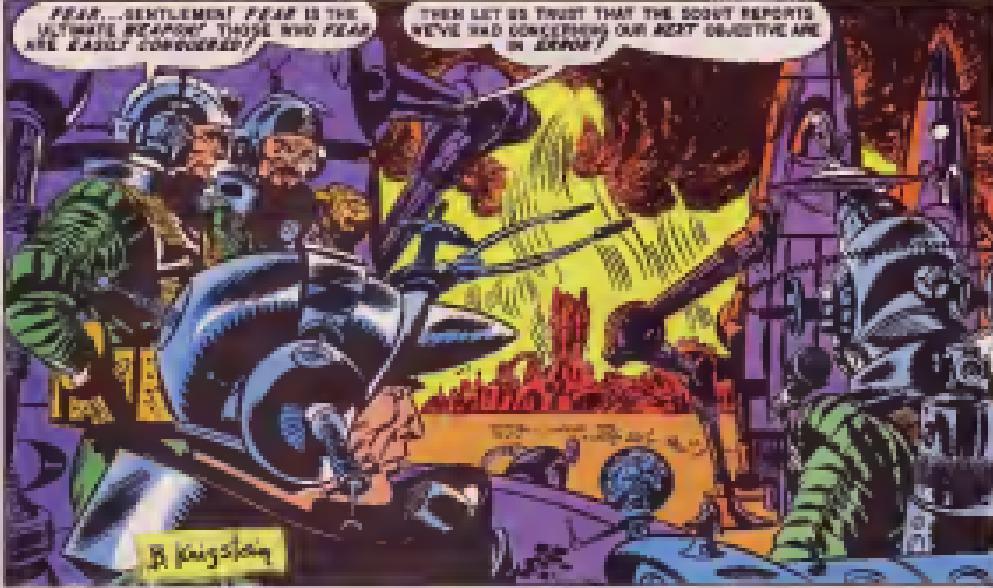
THE
END.

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

GURT WAS PLEASER. THE DESTRUCTION HIS SHIPS HAD BROUGHT TO ALMOST ABSOLUTELY HABIS WAS A BUTTERFLY FROM ONE MORE LIFE. IN THE CRASH OF CONQUEST THE PLANET HAD FLOWN ACROSS A DODGER SOLAR SYSTEMS WHICH LEARNED AMONGST ITS HOME PLANET. NOW, THE COLONISTS FROM MINTON WOULD COME AND BATTLE UNPREDICTED. BUT THAT WAS NOT GURT'S BATTLE. GURT WAS A SOLDIER. HIS INTERESTS WERE IN TACTICS...WEAPONS...

FEAR...GENTLEMEN! FEAR IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON! THOSE WHO FEAR ARE EASILY CONQUERED!

THEN LET US TRUST THAT THE SOOTH REPORTS WE'VE HAD CONCERNING OUR NEXT OBJECTIVE ARE IN ORDER!



D. King Stein

FOR A PLANET WHERE PEOPLE HAVE FOUGHT A WAR AGAINST AMONG THEMSELVES AT LEAST ONCE DURING EACH OF THESE GENERATIONS MAY NOT LAST LONG?

GURT TURNED TO AMUSE HIS SECOND IN COMMAND. A HERO WHO BECOMES AN ANNOYANCE...WITH HIS ETERNAL POSSUM.

A PEOPLE FIGHTING AGAINST THEMSELVES IS ONE THING; A PLANETARY ANARCHY IS ANOTHER! THEY WILL FIGHT! THEY WILL FEAR! THEY WILL Scream AS ALL THE OTHERS HAVE BEFORE!



TIME-LUFFED AND RETURNED TO HIS OBSERVATION OF THE BURNED MARTIAN CITY. BUT... ALSO THAT ABOUT THE MOMENT'S PLUNGE INTO DARKNESS... IT HAD BEEN LIKE THIS JUST BEFORE THE ATTACK ON MARS, TOO! ANDRE... AND HIS FIGHTERS...

"NO WEAPON! VIOLENCE, PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN, THEIR PLANET'S SOOTHEY SHOULD BE EXTREMELY HIGH ALMOST UNHITTED! EXCELLENT!"

"NO WEAPONS, JEEZ! BUT THE REPORT ALSO STATES THAT MARTIANS HAVE AN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY ALMOST AS FAR ADVANCED AS OURS!"

YES, JUST BEFORE THE ATTACK ON MARS, WHEN THE FLEET'S SCOUTSHIP HAD RETURNED WITH ITS ODDLY-SILENT REPORTER, ANGIE HAD BEEN LOGISTICS AS USUAL.

"IF THEY FIGHT..."

"THEY WILL WIN EASILY!"

"SIR, IF THEY DO..."
THEY WILL WIN! THEY WILL NOT LET THEM FIGHT! YOU FORSAKE YOURSELF, SIR! I AS THE COMMANDER, WHEN IT BECOMES NECESSARY WE CAN TELL AND WHICH SUBJETIVE WE CANNOT! AND I SAY..."

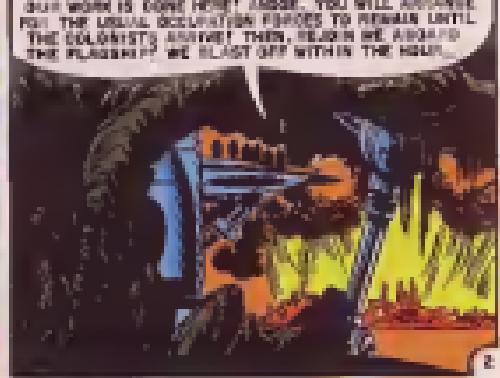
"WE ATTACK!"

GURT COULD SMILE NOW, FINALLY REMEMBERING HOW THE ATTACK HAD PROCEEDED. YES, HE'D BEEN RIGHT; HIS DECISION HAD BEEN CORRECT...

WHEN THE EIGHTH INVASION FLEET HAD LEFT DOWN-THERO, THERE WAS NO RESISTANCE. THE TERMINATED MARTIANS HAD CONFERRED AND SURMISSED. THEIR SYNTH-BULLETS WITH THE PEAR-SHOT HAD PREDICTED WOULD BE THERE...

AND, AS IT HAD BEEN WITH MARS, SO WOULD IT BE WITH THE FLEET'S NEXT DESTINATION? GURT SHOOK HIS HEAD. ANGIE WAS A FOOL, A PERSEVERATIVE FOOL...

"SIR, WORK IS DONE HERE! ANGIE, YOU WILL ADVANCE FORTH THE USUAL OCCUPATION FORCES TO REINFORCE UNTIL THE COLONISTS ARRIVED; THEN, PLEASE BE ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP! WE BLAST OFF WITHIN THE HOUR..."



ONE DAY, LATER, GALT COULD NOT HOLD BACK LONGER. THIS NEW PLANET, THE EARTH, ITS PEOPLE WERE NOT LIKE THE OTHER PLANETS. PLANS OF CONQUEST HAD BEEN FORMED AND FOR ALL THAT EARTH HAD BEEN IN OBSERVATION FOR A LONG TIME, AND THE REPORTS HAD BEEN... BORING.



THE OBSERVATION SHIP SWUNG UPWARD TOWARD THE PLANE'S NOSE, A SILVER WHALE SHIP MOVED INTO THE FIELD OF VIEW AS IT HEADED TOWARD THE LOOK WHERE THE BLACK-SUITED COUPLED CREW WAITED.



COMBINING THE TWO SHIPS, AIR LOVINS WAS A SIMPLE MATCH. HOWEVER, WITH THIS, THE COUPLE WAS IN QUITE A POSITION. CLAIMED BY THE AIR FORCE, ACCORDING TO THE FACT THAT THE SMALLER SHIP CARRIED NO PRESURIZED ATMOSPHERE...



GALT SIGNED IN ANNOYANCE, MADE AGAIN...



GURT RUSHED A MOMENT, THEN...
IN THE MEANTIME, A LEADER
MUST BE COMPROMISING ENOUGH
TO LEAP IT IS TIME I DISCOURSED
IN PEACE AND PEACE PAY FOR THAT
HIGH POSITION, ANOTHER WE WILL
JOIN SO.



IN THIS CASE, RONNARD'S LOGICAL
CONSIDERATION WOULD BE BEST, BUT GURT
COULD NOT JOIN THAT, EVEN TO HIM
SELF. SOON, HE AND HIS SECOND IN COM-
MAND WERE READY.



AND MOMENTS LATER, THE
SCOUT SHIP UNCOUPLED FROM
THE FLEET AND WHIRLED
AWAY TOWARD EARTH...



ON THE WAY DOWN, GURT INHERENTLY EQUIPPED HIM-
SELF WITH THE SIMULATOR, THE DEVICE WHICH WOULD
INFLATE A KNOWLEDGE OF EARTH'S MAJOR LANGUAGES
IN HIS BRAIN AUTOMATICALLY, WITHIN SEVENTH YEAR.



THERE IS A
STRUCTURE OF
SOME SORT.
IT IS ALONE
IN THIS OPEN
TERRAIN...



THERE WAS A BUTTON INSIDE THE DOOR TO THE
STRUCTURE: A BRILLIANT CIVIL NO COULD. GURT
DEPRESSED IT. THE REACTION OF THE FEMALE WHO
OPENS THE DOOR IN RESPOSE TO THE BUZZ WAS
MOST ENTHUSIAS...



IT WAS ALL THERE: SHOCK, CONSTERNATION, SURPRISE,
BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT. SHE STARED AT GURT
AT ARMS, AND HER EXPRESSION CHANGED...



IT WAS INCREDIBLE, BUT SHRIEKED ALMOST. THE WOMAN WAS FURIOUS BECAUSE OF THE GIGO BLOSSOMS AT ANOTHER PARTY AND THE FEAR THAT THE FEAST WAS OVER.

THE AREA...COMES THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
JOHNSON'S NOT INTERFERING WITH KARATEKA'S RAZOR PROGRAM...

WE...WE ARE
TODAY? WHAT WE SPEAK TO YOU? WE HAVE COME IN LOVE DAY?

WELL, DON'T YOU THINK I KNOW WHAT THAT'S COME ON? COME ON! LET'S GET THIS CHILD OUTTA HERE!

YES, FOR COURSE TH - THANK YOU!

THEY FOLLOWED HER INSIDE THE STRUCTURE, CAUTIOUSLY, THEIR HANDS ON THEIR BEARMS...



THE WOMAN STOOD WITH ARMS FOLDED, DEPICTED ABREAST, STUDING THEM AS THOUGH SHE HELD THEM IN CONTEMPT...

HOW, JUST WHAT IS IT YOU MEANT? COULDNT YOU HAVE COME IN THE DAYTIME? YOU WONT' SEE MUCH DURING THIS TIME OF NIGHT!

YOU KNOW WHY MY ASSOCIATES THAT WE'VE COME TO CHARMERS?

WELL, OF COURSE! WE'VE BEEN PREPARING YOU BUT TRANSLATING MY LANGUAGE YOU HAVEN'T MADE A FOOL OF ME. I CAN TELL YOU THAT!

THIS FINAL PART IT WAS INCREDIBLE! SHE WAS NOT ARMED, ONLY PIRED. AND HER EYES GLINTED WITH A KNOWING ATTITUDE...

YOU DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, BUT PLEASE, DON'T DO ANY DAMAGE. WE'RE HERE TO CHARM!



SHE... OF COURSE! THE JEWISHBOY - THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN WHEN THE JEWISH BOY MOVE IN! YOU WON'T BE UNARMED, BUT TOULIS IS WAITING FOR YOU!

SO THAT WAS IT! A THIEF! SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, BUT THERE IT WAS! HE ASKED NO MORE QUESTIONS...

PANIC CAME LIKE A WAVE, WASHING OVER HER, CROWNING HER REASON IN ITS CLOTHING, LEAVING TASTE OF TERROR...



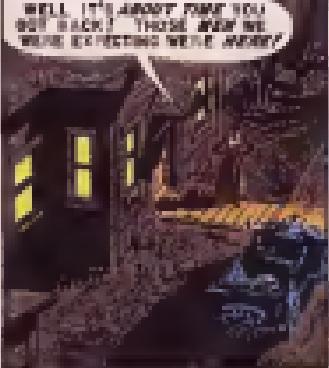
FEAR CAME...



FEAR CAME AND FROZE A SWIRLING RISE BACK TO A FLASH...

FEAR CAME AND DROVE AN INFINITE FLEET BACK INTO THE VAST VOID FROM WHICH IT HAD COME...

AND ON EARTH, A FORMER IRON GUARD TURNS AGAINST HIS OWN LEAGUE OF IRON MARVELS AT THE STEPS...



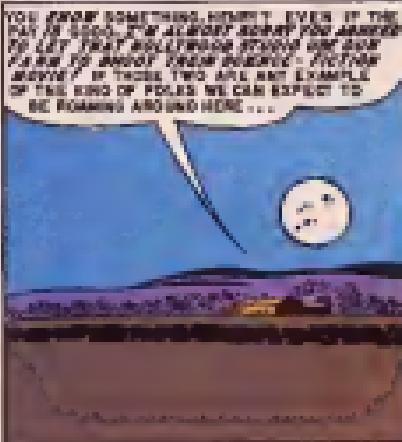
IRON GUARD: JUST LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON HERE! IT'S BURNING DOWN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HIT!



AND YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE BETTER THEY WERE WEARING SPACE-SUIT'S TELLING OUT OF THE AIRPORT COMPANY TOOK THEM THAT SHELL-CASE TO STAY INVOLVED WITH OFFICE...



YOU KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T, EVEN IF THE DAY IS OVER, I'M ALMOST SURE YOU AREN'T TO LET THAT BILLIONAIRE STUPID ONE USE YOUR PLANE TO SHOOT DOWN BEASTIE - VICTOR MORTON? IF THOSE TWO ARE ANY EXAMPLE OF THE KING OF FOOLS WE CAN EXPECT TO BE ROLLING AROUND HERE...



GERT SAT IN HIS PLAZZER, SHAKED HIS HEAD AS THE PLATE SURFACE HOME, AND THE PITY OF IT WAS HE NEVER KNEW ABOUT BENNY'S HONEST DEAL OR THAT HE MADE HIS COFFEE WITH COKE! HE NEVER TALKED TO HIM, THE LAZYBOY BEAST!



MARKED MAN

THE COURT-MARTIAL ADJUDICTS GIVES YOU YOUR REWARD FOR TWENTY YEARS OF SELFLESS DEVOTION TO DUTY IN A FEW TERRIBLE CRISP FRAXES... AND THE WINDSOFT STRIKES YOU WITH THE IMPACT OF A PHYSICAL BLOW. YOU'VE LIVED BY AN IRON CODE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE, BUILT UP OVER HALF A CENTURY IN THE HARSH, DIAMOND-HARD EMPTINESS OF DEEP SPACE. THAT'S WHY IT IS DIFFICULT TO KEEP YOUR FACE CALM, IMPOSSIBLE. YOU HAD EXPECTED

THE ENDGAME YOU HAVE JUST HEARD IS NOT THE DECISION OF THIS COURT. IT COMES DIRECTLY FROM THE ADMIRALTY, AND TAKES EFFECT WITHIN TWO HOURS. UNTIL THEN, YOU ARE FREE TO MAKE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS.



YOU SALUTE, TURN ON YOUR HEEL, AND LEAVE. AN ESCORT OF TWO ARMED GUARDS FALLS IN BEHIND YOU AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY BACK TO THE SHIP. HARDEN IS WAITING.

HOLLOWENDER, IT SEEMS THE JUPITER WILL BE UNDERTAKING COMMAND FROM NOW ON?

I... JESSE? THEN THE COURT REACHED A VERDICT.

ALL RIGHT. YOU MEN CAN REMAIN. HOLLOWENDER, I WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GUARDIAN. THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO BE WITH HIM WHEN HE PACKS.

THROWN, HARDEN, BUT I'M AFRAID THAT FROM NOW ON, WHEREVER HE GOES, HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE.



THE MARSHALS ENFORCED YOUR GO TO YOUR QUARTERS AND THEN STARED STIFFLY OUTSIDE, WAITING. BUT YOU DO NOT FEAR. YOU LOOK AROUND AT THE HOLLOW WALLS OF THE STATION. ARE YOU SILENTLY REMINISCING?



YOU REMEMBER HOW IT ALL BEGAN...GRADUATION EXERCISE AT THE SPACE ACADEMY...

CAPTAIN LIEUTENANT ABEL GRANT...
HORROR MAN...CLASSE OF '66...



THERE'D BEEN NO LAUGH, NO CHEER...NOT FOR YOU! EVER THEN, IF HAD BEEN THE SAME! ALTHOUGH YOU HAD BEEN DIFFERENTLY ARMED, DEDICATED...LIVING ONLY FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU WENT INTO SPACE AT LAST...



Sgt. JEV,
ALBERT,
UNIDENTIFIED
TAKES A SWIFTER
SHIP TO
COMPETITION
SHOT

SO IT MAY BE.
UNIDENTIFIED HAD
A SWIFT CAREER
TIL TO THE BREAK
OF DAY! THOSE
DAYS WILL BE GONE.
BUT SO WHAT?
THAT'S AN ADVICE!



THAT FIRST SPACE CRUISE...IT HADN'T
BEEN PLEASANT; YOU HADN'T BEEN
POPULAR...BUT YOU WERE ACCES-
SED TO THAT, AND IN THREE YEARS
YOU'LL BEAR OVER THE MASSAGE OF
A LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER.

THIS IS YOUR OBJECTIVE, COMMANDER:
VENUS! WE HAVE DEFINITE INFORMATION
THAT THE ASSASSINS ON VENUS
ARE HOLDING EARTH MEN AS PAY-
GAMES. YOU WILL BRING BACK
THOSE MEN, OR...



OR MAKE CERTAIN THAT SUCH AN INCIDENT DOES NOT
HAPPEN AGAIN! THOSE WERE YOUR ORDERS, AND THE
VENUIAN NATIVES HAS LEFT YOU NO CHOICE...

YOU REFUSE TO
RELEASE THE
EARTH MEN, THEN?

WE REFUSE! BUT YOU SHALL SEE
THEM! YOU SHALL ZAP THEM IN
OUR BLACK PIT!! SEE THEM!



BACK TO THE SWIFT SHOT!



NOT THE VENUSIAN INHABITANTS HAD LEFT YOU NO CHOICE. SPACE TRAVEL WAS STILL BEING IN ITS INFANCY THEN. AND EARTHWIND COULD BE SAFE IN THE SYSTEM'S FAR FLUNG SIEGE WORLD ONLY IF THEY WERE EXPECTED AND FEARED.

TAKE HER OR LIEUTENANT WARREN! I WANT THAT CITY OF THEIRS BLASTED TO STOOLY!



THE EASY-UP BUT BIG DAY? WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING THEIR PRISONERS?



I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE THAN YOU DO, LIEUTENANT. BUT I'VE GOT TO DO MY JOB! TAKE HER DOWN!

THE CREW HAD MURKED, NOT UNDERSTANDING, BUT YOUD HAD YOUR CREDITS.



YOU'D LEFT NOTHING LIVING BEHIND YOU. AND FROM THAT DAY ON, YOUR NEW EARTHWIND WOULD BE SANE OR VENOM. BUT YOUR CREW HAD NOT BEEN AT THAT, EVER, AFTERWARD.



THAT DAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, YOU'D WONDERED IF THE DEEP VENUSIANS CHOOSEN YOU YOURSELF WAS TOO RAPE... TOO UNHUMAN OR SOMETHING.



BUT, NOT PLACE WAS NOT A PLACE FOR SOFTNESS! YOUD GONE DRY AND YOUR REPUTATION HAD BROUGHT YOU EVERY UNWANTED, TROUBLED, DIRTY ASSIGNMENT IN THE SYSTEM...

AS OF TODAY, YOU WILL BE IN COMMAND OF EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET. IT'S WHAT YOU KNOW WHAT WE WANT, COMM VOLTA?

TELLIN' FULL DETAILS ON PERFORMANCE, SERIES-SPEC, MAJOR DAY PLANNING AND EFFECTS OF EACH FEE-GATE—EVEN ON THE OFFICER BODY OF ROCKET?



YOUD TAKEN THE X-STRIKE, THREE MONTHS IN DEEP SPACE, FAR BEYOND THE LIMITS MAN HAD YET PRESED...



PER-NOT?

SIR, DON'T BE TOO HARRY
ON THEM! THE MEN ARE AS
FAR AS I KNOW IT'S
BEEN A LONG CRUISE
AND...

THE CRUISE HAS ONLY
JUST STARTED AND I WILL
HAVE NO CRUISES ABOARD
BY SUNDAY! EACH OF THESE
MEN WILL HAVE TO PAY FOR
ONE DAY OF THE CRUISE!

HOW THEY'D HATED YOU, BUT YOU'D DONE WHAT YOU'D
BEEN ORDERED TO DO. YOU'D SAILED WITH THE OTHERS
WHEN YOUR OXYGEN SUPPLIES BEGAN TO PETER OUT.



YOU'VE GASPED... AND YOU'VE BROUGHT
YOUR SHIP HOME, AND THE MEN HAD
SPREAD THE WORD. THE REPORTERS
HAD COME FLOCKING.

I UNDERSTOOD YOU LOST
TWO MEN, COMMANDER.
ISN'T THAT A MAJOR
FARE TO PAY JUST TO
TEST THE EFFICIENCY
OF A NEW SHIP?

IT COULDN'T
BE HELPED. I
HAD MY DUTY.
WHAT'S DEFINITELY
LIES IN THE
STARS!

MARIE DESTINY
OR POLARIS?
COMMANDER CAN
SEEK A MAN
TO BREAK
DESTINY?

I HAVE NO
MISSION
EXCEPT TO
BREAK DESTINY.
SOLO DAY
SETTLEMENT

YOU MEAN THAT FROM THE HOME
BUT THE WOMEN HAS THOUGHT
OTHERWISE.

AND IT SEEMS TO THIS REPORTER
THAT NO MAN SHOULD BE GIVEN
THE RIGHT TO SACRIFICE WOMAN
LIVES FOR THE SAKE OF PERSONAL
PLEASURE...



THE FOOL! OH, THE FOOL! YOU'VE DONE YOUR BEST, AND
THAT'S TORN YOU TO BITS! IT WASN'T MEANT IT AL-
MOS, YOU SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT! AND THEN THE
SHIP FROM BEYOND PLUTO HAS STRUCK...

THE SHIPS HAD STRUCK... AND YOU'VE LEARNED AT LAST
IF YOU'VE BEEN ORDERED TO TEST THE K-ST...

WE'VE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT THIS ATTACK WAS
COMING, COMMANDER GRANT! THEY WERE FROM JUPITER, A
COLD STAR BEYOND PLUTO WE REACHES SOLES THAT
COULD STABE EARTH AT THEIR HOME DISTANCE!



NO, NO, AS THE GREAT MAN WHO EVER TAKEN A SHIP THAT FAR INTO SPACE, YOU'D LED THE INVASION FLEET TO CAPTURE A HUNDRED SHIPS - AND FIVE THOUSAND MEN WHO HATED YOUR INBREDS...



TRY TO MAKE YOU A CAPTAIN FOR THAT
AND YOU'VE FLED BACK INTO OBSCURITY.
THE MAN HAS DON ON. YOU'RE FOUGHT
AND THEN, THERE'S BEEN THAT FATEL
DAY.

IN THE END, YOU'D BECOME
NOTHING MORE THAN A GLORIFIED
CHAMPION, THE GRAND ADMIRAL
OF THE FLEET HAD CHOSEN YOUR
SHIP TO CARRY HIM ON AN INSPECTION TOUR.

TWENTY YEARS... AND THAT HAD BEEN
YOUR HONOR. HOW IT HAD BEEN LOST.
HOW THE CONTEMPT AND STABBINAT
YOU FROM TEN THOUSAND EYES ON
A GREEN OUTPOST ROCKET FIELD...



YOU ARE ALIVE! ON THAT FLIGHT BACK TO EARTH, WHEN
THE ENEMY HAD SURELY APPAILED, YOU'RE ALMOST
WISHED THE REBELS WOULDN'T PICKED THEM UP. BETTER
A QUICK DEATH THAN WHAT POSSIBLE...

WHAT ARE THE
ARMED'S
DIRECTIONS?

IF WE FIGHT, WE MIGHT DESTROY ONE
OF THEM. POSSIBLY FEWER BUT THE
GODS ARE TOO BRAVE! WE'LL TRY TO
TRY TO DEFEND THEM AGAINST GRANTY!



THE ADMIRAL HAD ORDERED YOU TO RUN... BUT THE
ENEMY HAD BEEN PAST TOO FAST...

THEY'RE JUST A COUPLE!
WE MIGHT LOSE THEM IF WE
GET DOWN IN THAT AFTERNOON,
BUT IT'S NOTHE A DAY!

IT MIGHT ALSO BE
ARMED, CAPTAIN!
THOSE WHEELS OF
ROCK ARE LIKE MOUNTAIN
BUT... THEY WOULD'NT MOVE
FOR IT!



IT HAD BEEN A DANGEROUS PLAN... A DELICATE MANEUVER, BUT YOU WERE USED TO THAT KIND OF DANGER. YOU WERE A SNICK-DEAN, SHIMMIED HARD.

YOU'D ELUSIVE THEM. THEY'D SHOT AWAY INTO INFINITE DISTANCES FOR YOU, AND THE JETPACKS BEHIND HOME TO EARTH. AND THEN, ONE WEEK OUT, IT'S HAPPENED...



SUDDENLY, THE ADMIRAL HAD Fainted. HE'S BEGIN TO GASP... HIS SKIN CHY-
ZED.

THE ADMIRAL'S MEDICAL OFFICER
HAS BEEN MURKED.

SO FAR, NEITHER OF YOU
SHOW ANY SIGN OF IT.
THE ADMIRAL SEEMS TO
HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ONE
AFFLICTED, BUT IT'S
ONLY A MATTER OF TIME,
THE DOCTORS SAY.
TILL WE ALL...

WE'RE SCARED. IT'S
SOME SORT OF ANNIHIL-
LATORIAN DISEASE.
HE COULD'T HAVE
ABSOLUTELY NO
RESISTANCE TO IT!

AND THERE'S
A CHANCE
WE'LL ALL
BEING
INFECTED.

IT'S ALMOST A DISEASE —
FAVORITE, I MEAN. NOT
AN ASTRO DISEASE.
MY GUESS IS WE'LL FEND
IF UP AGAINST THAT
ASTROFAVORITE.

CAN YOU
GIVE IT?



IT HAD BEEN A DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE, BUT YOU MADE IT, AND THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT HAD STARED AT YOU.

BUT CAPTAIN HIS FONDNESS I HAVE NO TIME TO ANSWER - LIEUTENANT, YOU WILL SIGHTLY IF ANYONE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS WITH ME WHAT I AM OBLIGED TO DO FOR THIS BOAT OF ALL?

YOU HADN'T REPLIED IF THAT WAS, BUT HOW COULD YOU HAVE EXPLAINED IT TO HIM - IT'S THE MEN, WHAT YOU AND THE DOCTOR KNOWN THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FAMOUS WHEN THE LIEUTENANT CAME AT YOU, WHAT ELSE COULD YOU SAY?

YOU STOPPED HIM WITH A STUNNING BLAST, AND THE LIEUTENANT HAD EYES A TURNED, THEY'D CHEATED...

AIR L



AND SO, A CAPTAIN HAD ENDED - TWENTY YEARS... YOU'D KNOWN HOW IT WOULD BE, BACK ON EARTH, THE COUNT-MAN HADN'T SURPRISED YOU...

THE ADMIRAL, DE-BUTCHERED, HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN SOUGHT HOME...

THAT WILL DO, LIEUTENANT! YOU WILL ANSWER QUESTIONS... NOT SENT DAYDREAMS!



YOU'D SAT THROUGH IT ALL, SILENTLY, GRIMLY? THE COUNT-MAN'S MEDICAL OFFICER HAD GIVEN HIS REPORT AND YOU'D TESTIFIED WITNESS, TOLD DOWN TRUE, EACH AS YOU'D BEEN IT - FOR THE SAKE OF ALL, FOR EARTH, THAT HAD BEEN YOUR COSE. ALL OF YOUR LIFE AS THE COUNT-MAN'S, HADN'T SURPRISED YOU, ONLY THE VERSITY...



WHICH SHOWS YOUR REVERENCE... YOU FUSE WITH A SHIP.

THEY'LL BE HOWLING AS MY HELLS, REVERENCE, BUT I'LL NOT SAY... AS ALREADY?

IN WHICH YOU REACH THE SEN-TORIAL SWIFTY DEATH, THE PIANO COLORANT?



IN, MURDEROUS! THE PIANO COLORANT IT SEEMS THAT CERTAIN MEN HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING MY CLUES, PERHAPS FROM FISH WHO DABBERED AND FISH DIAMOND-HAND SPACE IS CLEAR THAT ONLY A DIAMOND CAN SET A QUARTET



IN YOUR HEARTS, YOU'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT END LIKE THIS, IT HAD TO, AND YOU WORRIED SOON, AS YOU TELL, MURDER THE VERDICT, WHETHER A LIFE-TIME OF A COSE THIS HAS BEEN WORTH IT.



THEY'VE MADE ME THE NEW GRAND ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET,

WARRIOR!

THE END